Essential Skills for Online Students

Self-motivated and independent learner

While online courses can offer more flexibility in scheduling, they require more self-discipline and independence than on-campus courses. In an online class, you have to be self-disciplined in order to follow the class schedule and meet deadlines.

Learning to program is a step-by-step process. Each week you will learn new skills and combine them with the skills you learned previously to build more complex programs. If you skip a week, it may be difficult to complete subsequent assignments.

Computer Literacy

You need to have a basic knowledge of computer and Internet skills in order to be successful in an online course. Here are some of the highlights:

- Knowledge of terminology, such as *browser*, *application*, etc.
- Understanding of basic computer hardware and software; ability to perform computer operations, such as:
  - Using keyboard and mouse
  - Managing files and folders: save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete, check properties
  - Software installation, security and virus protection
  - Using software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, email clients
  - Knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, saving files in different formats
  - Sending and downloading attachments
- Internet skills (connecting, accessing, using browsers)
- Ability to use online communication tools, such as email

Active learner

Online students must be active learners, self-starters who are not shy or afraid to ask questions when they do not understand. Remember that you, not the instructor, must be in control of your learning process. If you have problems, whether technical, understanding course content, or difficulty meeting the deadlines, please let the professor know right away.

Remember that your professor is not the only source of information. You can also post your question in the discussion forum and your classmates will help you as well.

Learning to program takes a great deal of practice. In this class, you will be watching many videos that demonstrate how to create parts of the program. Most of these videos are about 3 to 7 minutes. You should watch it once to get the idea. Then try to perform the same actions on your own computer. You may have to go back and watch the video again to pick up things you missed. Finally, you should practice the new skills to create your own program that is different but uses similar techniques.